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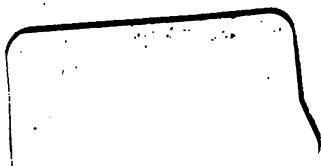


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BOOBS
as seen by ~
JOHN HENRY

GEORGE V. HOBAKE

en or, American



Miss
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BOOBS

As Seen by John Henry

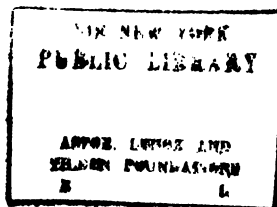
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE CABARET BOOBS	5
II. THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS	25
III. THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS	42
IV. HOME DINNER BOOBS	60
V. THE POKER PARTY BOOBS	74
VI. THE SHOPPING BOOBS	85
VII. THE VANITY BOOB	100
VIII. THE TIPPING BOOBS	115

BOOBS

CHAPTER I

THE CABARET BOOBS



Say! Did you ever burst right into Bohemia and with the aid of a complaining pocketbook try to Help yourself to a Hilarious evening?

Tag me—I'm It.

Of course, I don't mean Bohemia in the highbrow sense—nix. Not one of those quaint retreats with the lemon-colored atmosphere where sad-eyed Artistic Temperaments fore-

gather to chop spaghetti with a fork and bark hand-made repartee at each other over a beaker of absinthe—nix.

I mean the Bohemia so called by the Buyer from Max Plahn's Universal Emporium, Waukesha, Wis., who hits New York along in August and leaves the imprint of his sandals all over Longacre Square and adjacent by-ways.

The Bohemia, so called, which is composed of incandescent lights disguised as rosebuds; Bulgarian waiters disguised as second-story workers, and a menu card which, without any disguise, leads the unwary directly to a Petition in Bankruptcy.

The Bohemia, so called, where the wise virgin trims her lamps about nine o'clock of an

evening and when said lamps get to flashing over the Martini and other happy waters, believe me, the suckers rise to the surface so fast that the waiters have to hand out eye-shades.

P. S.—Foolish virgins with untrimmable lamps are not to be found in this Bohemia, so called.

Ever since we've been back in New York, Peaches has been Handing out Hints that she'd like to have me take her over the hurdles into that Fair Land where ragtime and breaded pork chops do a sister act—to one of those real devilish New York Cabarets.

Rub his ankles, Doctor; the blood has rushed to his Bean!

I tried to explain to friend wife that the

Cabaret is an institution invented solely for the purpose of giving hiccups to Gold-plated Strangers, but Peaches was strong for a Peek at the Night-Life of New York and it was up to me to furnish the opera glasses.

She wanted to know if I thought she could toy with a tenderloin steak in some Musical Soup-House without having a policeman call her by her first name.

I told her I was away on sick leave the morning Cabaret Etiquette had been passed around, but I'd ask my friend Hep Hardy about it.

Hep is what they call in the laurajans a Prince of Good Fellows.

As near as I can size him up, a Prince of Good Fellows puts in twelve hours a day try-

ing to stab himself to death with Bronx cocktails, and the other twelve hours are devoted to screaming for help and ice-water.

Mind you, I'm not Knocking Hep.

Nix on the Knock.

Far be it from me to aim the Hammer.

When it comes to falling off the street sprinkler I can do an annettekellermann that gets loud applause from all the members of the High Tide Association—so tuttley-tut on the knock!

His father cut out the breathing business about four years ago and left Hep with a million and a half and a long dry spell on the inside.

Hep has been in the surf ever since. His only recreation between bars is golf. He in-

vented the G. A. R. score in that game—out in '61, back in '65.

I explained my sad plight to Hep over the 'phone, and, later on, with Peaches all dolled up like a Corot landscape, we met Hep by appointment in front of Bustafiddlestrings Cabaret.

Hep in his man-about-town scenery was a sartorial dream in black and white. He had everything on, including half a bun.

"Well, if it isn't John Henry!" he hague-andhagued. "Touch thumbs with your old pal!" Then in a side speech he wanted to know what musical show had loaned me its prize chicken.

I introduced him to my wife and he tried to square himself by explaining that now that his

right eye was properly focused she didn't look at all like a chicken—she was more of the squab type.



Then with a merry burst of vermouth-laden laughter he led the way into the Cabaret.

The head waiter met us at the edge of the reservation.

Hep slipped him something that made a noise like five dollars, and the H. W. bowed. Hep slipped him again, and he bowed lower. Hep slipped him another little map of the mint, and the H. W.'s forehead scraped the floor. Hep ceased slipping, and the H. W. came up on the other side and led us to a table.

The room was a-dazzle with Gaudy Lights. Ragtime music hurried away from a preoccupied orchestra, hit the ceiling, bounced off, and scampered around the tables. Laughter, both refined and careless, tried to drown the clatter of dishes—and won out. Cigarette smoke and Mary Garden perfume clinched in a death-struggle all over the place, and Mary put the boots to Murad every time.

“So this is Bohemia!” sighed Peaches, as

the head waiter pulled out a chair and dared her to sit down. "John, dear, do point out the celebrities to me, won't you?"

"They haven't come in yet," I gurgled, and Hep let loose a laugh so nearly like that of a nervous coyote that four waiters rushed up, prepared to take any kind of a tip.

Just as we were sinking gracefully into our plush chairs, and the Sicilian brigand was about to take our order, who should float into the drydock but Max Mincenstein, one of Hep's friends—after 2 A. M.

I don't know how Max ever pressed close enough to get on Hep's staff.

Max has money. He'll always have it—the same money.

Max is a lazy loosener.

When the waiter returns with the check Max is the busiest talker in the bunch.

Max loves money. Money loves Max. They are inseparable.

Whenever Max passes a bank he takes off his hat and walks on his toes.

I spoke his name rapidly when I introduced Max to Peaches, but, as she was busy trying to lead a swift life by ordering a seltzer lemonade, it didn't make much difference what I called him.

Hep must have been sitting over a trapdoor, because suddenly wine coolers began to festoon themselves around about him. Blue wine coolers appeared at his right, magenta wine coolers at his left, and ice, drift ice as far North as the eye could see. Presently a pla-

toon of waiters began to annoy the corks and then followed a correct imitation of the second day at Gettysburg.

One cork went over quickly to another table and struck a fat, moneyed person from Pittsburgh between the second and third floor of his accordion chin. He thought it was one o'clock, so he arose hurriedly and left the room.

For months he'll be telling the home folks how he beat the police to it at closing time.

Meanwhile Max was overboard with a splash. For the first ten minutes he had three waiters on the verge of nervous prostration trying to supply the suds fast enough. But Max didn't play Rugby rules—he used two glasses and both hands. After a time, how-

ever, he feathered both oars and drifted aimlessly with the tide.

"Pardon me!" said Peaches to Max, in an effort to pass out a bit of Society Salve, "but do you find it interesting—this glimpse of Bohemia?"

"Bohemian nothing!" bubbled Max. "This joint is Cosmopolitan—sure thing! The chef is a Frenchman; the pastry cook is a Greek; the head waiter is a German; they got a Hungarian violinist and the proprietor has a wife and two kids in Jersey City, but he don't go there much. Bohemian, not on your powder puff!"

Peaches took the count, then she leaned over and whispered to me, "What is he?—a painter?"

"Oh! he's a painter all right," I squeaked;
"when some one leads him up to a tub."

"Water colors or oil?" she asked.

"Oil," I said; "fusel oil."

"Has he ever done any good thing?" she
queried.

"Yes," I said; "Hep Hardy."

"Oh! I'm enjoying this *so* much," she coo-
cooed, giving Max and his past performances
the sudden pass-by. "Who is that man at that
other table with the fawn-like eyes and the
long hair?"

He was the night watchman of an apart-
ment house uptown, but I gave her an easy
speech to the effect that he was Bill Men-
delssohn, a grandson of old man Mendelssohn,

who once wrote a wedding march so carelessly that it is now used as a coon song.

She gasped and gurgled with delight—in Bohemia and having the time of her young life, so I let her dream.

In the meantime Hep, with a bucket of wine, was busy trying to put out the fire in the well Max used as a neck.

Every time a waiter looked at our table Hep's roll would blaze up.

Peaches presently concluded she'd broaden out a bit on Art and the Old Masters, so she asked Max if he liked Rembrandt.

Max looked at her out of the corner of his eye, and murmured, "Much 'bliged, but I'm up to here now!"

Then he pointed at his Adam's apple and fell asleep.

Hep was beginning to see double. Every once in a while he'd stop humming "Here Comes My Daddy Now—Papa, Papa, Papa, Papa!" then he'd close one eye and with the other look over at Peaches and hand her a sad, sweet smile.

It's a gay life, boys!

When our expensive food finally arrived Hep was gazing at his fingers and wondering how they got on his hands, while Max, the genial pest, with his chin driven through his shirt front, was over on Dream Avenue, about to hitch up his favorite nightmare and take a spin through Bugland.

Peaches was toying with a spoonful of con-

sommé Julienne, and I was parleying shoe-string potatoes back on my fork, when suddenly there came a great clanging of bells, doors rattled and banged, women screamed and the orchestra fell out of a back window—all except the bass fiddle. He fell in a bowl of soup left for him by an obliging but hurrying waiter.

Max woke up suddenly, looked about wild-eyed, and slid gracefully under the table.

Hep, with a roll of bills in each hand, tried to stand up and defy the universe, but he toppled over among the wine coolers and passed peacefully away again in cold storage.

A fat man with a beard and a dialect ran around in circles exclaiming that he was the

proprietor, but nobody pinned a medal on him, and he burst into sobs.



Then he rushed over to our table and yelled, "Get out! Get out!"

"Why should we get out?" I inquired, placing a piece of fried chicken tenderly in his outstretched hand.

"Because it's closing-up time and I always

forget about it. The police have to come and remind me.”

Then he threw the fried chicken at the lady cashier and faded out of our lives.

I looked in the direction of the door. Yes, there they were—an Army Corps of Cops, marching steadily forward into that Palace of Pies, fearless in the face of danger.

It was a brave sight to see them deploy by fours and reaching forward with their nightsticks knock a hunk of beefsteak out of a hungry diner’s hand.

I grabbed Peaches by the elbow, and we beat it from Bohemia while the beating was good.

The last I saw of Max he was acting as a foot-rest for the general commanding the

Fifth Brigade, while Hep slept peacefully on amid the upturned wine coolers and the ice floes.

Bohemia, eh?

So this is what they call Having A Good Time in New York!

Mr. Umpire, I called you Bad Names—put me on the Bench.

This burg is the home of the gink who can't keep his temperature down unless he is continually sniffing the odor of burning money.

This Gink's idea of being a gentleman is to get into a Tuxedo make-up and swap gags with a bunch of booze biters while mamma has to tie herself up in a Mother Hubbard and stay home alone till papa gets through being a good fellow.

Cabarets, eh?

Hereafter me for the little Ptomaine Parlor where the Dill pickles hide behind the bowl of pulverized sugar and wink at you when the waitress splashes an omelette on your shoulder.

But Peaches thought it was all perfectly lovely.

"And you'll take me some night soon," she marshmallowed, "where we can see some real turkey-trotting, won't you, John, dear!"

A glass of water, nurse; he's fainting.

CHAPTER II

THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS



Say! did you ever
get ready and go to a
Turkey Trot party?

Scold me—I de-
serve it, Paw!

You wouldn't
think it, but here in New York the Pet of
Fortune who makes it his life's work to Burn
Money is sometimes hard put for an excuse to
Light the Match.

When a Paloofa with nothing in his attic
but shredded wheat falls heir to a hatful of

Mazuma he quickly realizes that the money has to be ignited—*but how to do it!*

The awning that hangs between his pompadour and his eyebrows becomes care-furrowed from trying to figure out just how to set fire to the coin Dad left him without attracting the attention of the police.

The Poor Thing soon discovers that it's awfully hard to invent a new style in Financial Bonfires, so he falls back on the flint-and-steel method of ignition—and Gives a Party.

He knows that his bundle of green and yellow pathfinders will burn with a brighter flame if he can induce a lot of Night Riders to tarry by his hearthstone during the ceremony.

And joy in abundance is his when they be-

THE TURKEY-TROTting BOOBS 27

gin to kick the ashes around his \$5,000 apartment with their slippered feet.

Having heard Peaches breathe a desire to be Among Those Present at a Turkey Toddle, our friend Hep Hardy got busy with his favorite paying teller and gave one.

I tried to explain to friend wife that she'd find herself in a blush-producing atmosphere where she'd hear them discussing White Slave dramas, hot from the Grand Jury room, but she merely stung me with a dimpled smile, and said, "Tush! come on; let's tease a taxi!"

Hep lives in one of those expensive shacks where the entrance is made up to look like the room Louis the Fifteenth used to get shaved in.

When you step in the front room you think

you've suddenly arrived at a forced sale of art objects and bric-a-brac.

The attendant who greets you with a grin like a comatose catfish must have been at one time a captain in the Imperial German Army, for he still wears his Uhlan uniform with the hand-painted sleeves and the Murillo panels inserted in the silk stockings.

Some class, take it from Uncle Jasper!

There is such an air of subdued elegance and concentrated luxury about the lay-out that you want to rush to a telephone, call up your office and tell them there that you're never going to work again as long as you live.

The elevator doors swing open, disclosing a picture post card of a Turkish seraglio—whatever that is. Then a West Indian chauff-

feur, all dolled up like Sir Walter Raleigh on his way to see Queen Elizabeth, gives you the high sign and shoots heavenward while you sink to your waist in the Persian rug on the floor of the gilded cage.

Hep's parade grounds are on the twelfth floor. His apartment consists of eleven rooms and nine baths. Through an oversight the dining-room and the butler's pantry have no bath attached, but Hep says that defect will be remedied if he has to drop another \$3,000 a year into the Kitty.

The Party was in full blast when we reached the scene of the Conflagration.

A string orchestra concealed behind a lot of artistic rubber plants scattered enough rag-time for everybody to dip in and help them-

selves, so up and down through Hep's library into the drawing-room, through the living-room, across the hall, through the card room, around the foyer, back through the sitting-room, down the hall again and back into the drawing-room the various couples pranced and galloped and wriggled and squirmed and joshed each other into the belief that this was Life.

Hep met us at the door of the Fun Factory and introduced us to all the celebrities present, with the exception of those who were busy stepping on each other's feet in the joyous dance.

Peaches and I sat down to watch the mad revels, but as we did so a music box concealed in our little tête-à-tête sofa began to play

THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS 31

"Snookey Ookums," so we arose hurriedly and decided to stand during the rest of the carnival.

When we hurriedly arose to the occasion a Literary Gnat whose name is Georgie Nathun got the laugh of his life.

"Pardon me!" he said, giggling convulsively, "but to a man with my keen sense of humor the episode of the concealed music box was intensely ludicrous. Now that my laughter has subsided would you mind doing it over again that I may study the situation from a psychological point of view!"

What are you going to do with a fried smelt like that?

I wanted to coax him into one of the bath rooms and turn the shower on him, but

Peaches begged me not to dampen his youthful ardor, so I told him what particular ingredient of a cheese sandwich he resembled and passed him up.

Georgie is fearfully erudite. With his thumb and forefinger he picks big words out of his bulging forehead and assembles them into neat little paragraphs. These he carries on a tray to a magazine where kind-hearted men pay him money and beg him not to come back until he has spent it all.

Georgie was getting along very nicely until one day somebody told him he was clever—then he fell apart.

Now he makes up his pieces in front of a mirror and when he thinks of something devilishly cute he and his reflection exchange lov-

THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS 33

ing glances. Then he pins a medal on his breast and quits work for the day.

Somebody should take off Georgie's watch and slap his wrist real hard.

In the meantime the war dance of the Manhattan Indians went bravely on. It was catch-as-catch-can all over the place.



They swayed and toddled and wobbled and bobbled, each and all of them trying hard to

conceal the fact that they were human beings.

They danced the Lame Duck and Simpering Cinnamon Bear; the Lingering Drag and the Jack Rabbit Jump; the Boston Antelope, and the Philadelphia Scramble. Every once in a while they'd stop, take a long breath and then off again into the Buzzard Bend and Walrus Wiggle.

Each individual tried to act as a special agent for the Zoo.

"How do you like it?" I asked Peaches.

"It's awful," she gasped. "Look at that girl over there. Why does she try to act like a penknife?"

"Come out of the hardware store," I answered. "She's doing the Armadillo Bend-back!"

THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS 35

Just then Hep came up and asked Peaches if she wouldn't glide out and dodge the furniture with him, whereupon the Queen of my Bungalow shuddered from hairpins to shoe buckles, murmured, "I don't know how," and hid her head in my shoulder.

"I'll fix that," squeaked Hep, and two minutes later we were confronted by a thick-set individual who talked in chunks.

His name was Manuel Hochenstein and he had a map on him like a cross-section of the McAdoo tunnel.

"Why don't you get out and hit the hurdles with the hoppers?" he inquired.

"My wife wasn't brought up in a circus," I went back at him; "and I'm a shine acrobat."

"Aw, say, it's a cinch, this bunk Turkey

Trotting," Mr. Hochenstein informed us. "Why, in ten minutes I can learn anybody that isn't a war veteran with two wooden legs. I got a Studio where I learn everybody—ten dollars a lesson. Why, I've learned some of the swellest Society dames in this burg. You know I used to be a bookmaker, but there's more money in this game. It's a ten to one shot and I bring the bacon home every time the flag drops. It's a pipe—I can learn anybody. I learned Hep Hardy, didn't I?—and his feet are like a couple of nervous ferry-boats.

"All the Turkey Trot needs is two arms, two legs and a sunny disposition.

"Here's my card—anything you like I'll learn you—the tango, the dip, the trot, the

THE TURKEY-TROTting BOOBS 37

glide, the lope, the squat, the squirm, the slide, the spiral, the fore and aft, and the side-wheel. Say! if your wife will come out on the fire-escape where it's quiet I'll learn her the Texas Spider in eight minutes by a stop-watch—get me?"

"I get you," I said, "but I don't need you."

Then we permitted Manuel to fade abruptly out of our lives while Peaches gurgled, "Why should any sane person want to learn those awful dances!"

"True for you, little bright-lamps," I chortled; "but they tell me there's a wiggly bit of a germ that gets in the blood and then your temperature rises and you break out in a Bunny Hug."

"Nonsense!" she sniffed and left me flat

just as Hep bustled up again to inquire if we were having a good time.

"Great!" I ananiased; "but, say, Hep! you've been getting some new statuary, haven't you? What's that over in the corner there, with the bright lights around it—a Venus de Milo with the arms restored?"

"Let go!" Hep snickered. "That's Claribel Swift of the Frivolity Theater."

"Oh!" I said; "what's the matter—did the dressmaker disappoint her?"

"Why, no," Hep assured me; "she's wearing the latest in French creations—the cobweb gown."

"Well, why not get the poor girl a screen; she'll catch cold," I suggested just as Lord Rumbo of Merry England hawhawed his way

THE TURKEY-TROTTING BOOBS 39

over to us, whereupon Hep whispered something to me about being kind to the nobility and moseyed away.

"Ripping, isn't it?" said His Lordship.

"Which one?" I inquired; "that makes seven I've counted in half an hour."

"What are you referring to, I mean to say?" monocled the son of a Belted Earl.

"The skirts," I answered; "they've been ripping ever since the music started. Some of these ginks do the Turkey Trot like a hungry man going up an apple tree for a mid-day meal."

"Quite so," picadillied the last of his race; "but I was referring to the affair—the party! Ripping! I didn't think I was going to like America, I mean to say, but these Turkey Trot

parties have quite won me over—quite. I attend them constantly. I was broken-hearted when they closed the cabarets at one o'clock. Disgusting, really! What is life without the turkey trot—nothing! What is one's existence without the tango—nothing, I mean to say. Take away my Bunny Hug and what have I left—nothing! Separate me from my Boston Dip and life becomes a drear expanse. What's the use of going to restaurants any more? One can't eat one's soup without turkey trot music.

"I've tried it—and it splashes."

You know when the bug bites as deep as that it does no good to yell for peroxide.

"I say, old chap," His Lordship rattled along, "where's your charming wife? I should

like awfully to do the New Orleans Drag with her—what?”

“She doesn’t dance,” I said. “One foot is a Presbyterian; the other a Methodist—nothing doing.”

“I think she does splendidly,” the truant from the House of Lords came back at me. “Ah, there she is now with my friend, Hardy; doing the Cincinnati Cling, aren’t they?”

I looked and, suffering rag-time! his blue-blooded Nibs was right. There was Peaches with Hep Hardy hoofing it down the room and making the occasion a jubilee of joy.

Gasping, I fell back on the trick sofa and let “Snooky Ookums” play to the bitter end.

“Bind up his wounds, Doctor; with proper nursing we may pull him through.”

CHAPTER III

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS



Say! did you ever
put on your things
and go out hunting
for an apartment on
little old Manhattan
Isle?

It's a Gentle Pas-
time—take it from Uncle Hank!

It's an exercise that brings into play all the
hitherto unused muscles of the pocketbook.

As you grow more familiar with the Mys-
teries of the Game you see what a fatal mis-
take you made in not being born rich, and as

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 43

your faltering feet take you from one Palatial Bungalow to another you berate the Destiny which failed to make you a hotel clerk in Sharon, Pa., or a soda water operator in Dawson, W. Va.

Peaches, having tired of hotel life, began to murmur incoherently from time to time about "a sweet little nest of our own."

A nest, indeed! I had a friend once who built a nest in an uptown apartment house and three months later a strange bird flew in and eloped with his wife. So nix on the nest.

Friend wife was insistent, however, so finally we set forth in quest of a haven of rest where we should no longer be at the mercy of tip-sodden waiters and money-mad bell hops.

Letting go of the life line, we swam out

into the upper reaches of Broadway in search of a Renting Agency and were soon beyond hope of rescue.

Over there on our port bow loomed largely the fascinating entrance to Webb & Spider's, and like a million other flies we fell for it.

Assuming that air of languid indifference which is popularly supposed to indicate excessive moneyed interests, we gave the high sign to a gold-braided functionary at the entrance and eased ourselves into the silver-plated cavern where they take your measure for an apartment.

The Renting Agency of Webb & Spider was the velvet goods—take it from an eagle-eyed onlooker! Adorning the walls were paintings the like of which Rembrandt or Corot would

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 45

have been proud of—if sufficiently intoxicated. Mahogany and plate glass did team work all over the shop.

The soft murmur of thrush-throated typewriters gave an atmosphere of refinement befitting a place where money is painlessly extracted.

We were wading through a carpet with plush up to our ankles when suddenly appeared in our pathway one Sydney D'Brie, the lad with a map like a cow—the original Brother of the Ox.

No doubt you know lots of people who always smile and look conscious when accused of having Bovine Eyes, but did you ever catch the fellow with a whole face like a cow?

Sydney D'Brie is the answer. Every time

Syd looked at me I thought of the Beef Trust and shuddered.

Syd was one of the ushers at our wedding and to this day I don't know why I ever let that human Hamburger steak be an usher. He couldn't ush for sour pickles. All he could do was to put his face where I could see it and let tired Nature do the rest.

And here he was again, dancing gleefully back into our lives and gibbering like a gink with an unbuttoned brain.

"Well, well!" Syd chortled. "Isn't this a surprise, though! John Henry and Peaches! *Here!* Looking for an apartment, eh?"

"No, Syd," I came back, after shaking a limp mitt; "no, we were playing golf up Broadway and I happened to slice a ball

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 47

through the ventilator; so we came in after it!"

Syd bellowed joyously: "Ha, ha! Same old John Henry! Gee! I'm glad to see you. Want an apartment, don't you? How high you want to go?"

"Not above the sixth floor," I answered.

"Oh, I don't mean that—how high?" Syd asked.

"Well, not above 110th Street," I ventured.

"You don't get me," Syd complained. "I mean the price—how high you want to go in price?"

"Oh," I said, "something reasonable."

"How would \$6,000 strike you?" Syd inquired.

"It would strike me below the belt," I told

him. "I said we wanted something reasonable."

"Well," Syd chuckled, "six thousand a year is reasonable nowadays. We have apartments ranging all the way from \$5,000 up to \$30,000 a year."

"You may keep all of them with my compliments, Syd," I informed him. "What I'm looking for is a place to live in, not a hand-painted cabaret in which to entertain the Sheriff."

"I don't wish to pry loose any trade secrets, but tell me, Syd, how do you manage to rent an apartment when the formula is the same as buying an issue of City Bonds?"

"Cinch!" Syd gurgled brothily. "You can sell anything to the Rubes in New York."

***THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS* 49**

"Rubes in New York!" Peaches and I echoed.

"Surest thing you know," Syd beefed on; "there are more Rubes in New York than in all the rural districts tied together. Who is it rides up town on the Subway in the evening with a strange man standing on each one of his insteps—the Rube! Who is it pays eight dollars for a pair of seats and enables the ticket speculator to pick up bargains in real estate—the Rube! Who is it pays sixty cents a dozen for cold storage eggs so the Grocer can send his family to a Sprudel Spa—the Rube! And who has boosted the price on apartments so high that only those with a private Mint can squeeze through the gilded portals—the Rube with the coin!"

Syd looked around cautiously to see if the Flat Wheel of the Concern was listening.

"Take it from me, John," he went on, "the Rube with a Bundle of Dough is the answer to a lot of questions right here in this price-laden burg. The High Cost of Living is due to the prevalence of Rubes who have the wherewithal to Live High at any old Cost."

Then Syd took a long breath and whispered: "We cater only to Rubes with the cush. There's enough of them cutting off coupons around New York to make \$18,000 apartments possible. And what do they get for it—ha, ha!—silver-plated plumbing, gold buttons on the elevator boy and a lot of concealed laughter from the man who built the house. Do you honestly think, John, you

could drape yourself around an apartment with sufficient energy to get \$18,000 worth of enjoyment out of it in a year? Nix, old squills. You may be slightly bucolic in temperament, but you're no Rube; so take my tip and beat it from this district where every lighted window is a sign that money is burning furiously within."

I take back all I said about Syd D'Brie. He's a busy boy with the gab, but there's something in what he says. And if his face is like a cow it's an Ayrshire.

Bidding Syd an affectionate farewell we tip-toed out of the Rube's Retreat and went forth into the jungle alone.

Peaches soon discovered an assortment of sandstone and mortar which wagged its tail

when you called it Gladiolus Court; so we went in to take a look around.

“Gladiolus Court” was very select, the janitor told us. Then he showed us through a collection of five horse stalls on the sixth floor. When I asked him if he knew any place around there large enough to hold a table and two chairs he had a blowout in a perfectly good tire.

The janitor told us there were only three dark rooms, and when I told him that three out of five took the record away from England, I thought he’d bite me.

Our next guess was a tall, blonde building with a fricassee of iron around the front of it.

It was called The Gushworth Arms by those who cared to mention it at all.

The janitor was made up to look like a sea lion, but he had the softest voice I ever heard. It sounded like the rattle of pulverized sugar falling in a bowl of oatmeal.

He offered us seven rooms and a bath on the fifth floor, but when we got up there somebody had mislaid three of the rooms, and the bath, after hearing the janitor say so many times what he charged for the apartment, had shrunk to a foot tub; so we went sadly away from there.

Then with bowed heads and hearts from which hope was preparing to flee, we entered a conning tower through a stained glass port-hole.

It was called The Belladonna—because it was good for sore eyes.

An abrupt person with a drooping mustache met us abaft the quarter deck and began to mention large sums of money commencing with \$4,000 a year and going on up and up till he bit his tongue.

We merely swallowed our palates and fell back two paces to the rear.

When the abrupt person paused for a moment at "a duplex for \$14,000 a year," we



THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 55

turned and ran like a couple of jackrabbits on the way home to dinner.

Two blocks away we fell under the spell of a shack called The Ipseydooza.

A Cuban refugee met us at the door and dared us to come in.

We were offered an apartment on the eleventh floor which had never been occupied. The reason was obvious. The walls were too close together. It might be a success as a place to press autumn leaves, but not as a place to live in unless the tenants went through life standing up. We, therefore, declined with thanks and walked out backward, having little faith in Cuban refugees.

Presently Peaches found a pippin. It was

a gingerbread rookery with seven rooms and four landlords.

It was called The Pepsinetta and it looked the part.

There were sliding doors; hot and cold gas in every room, and the janitor had self-folding arms.

The outlook provided a superb view of the uncompleted Palisades, with blasting from 6 to 8 A. M. and malaria at all hours.

Peaches went dip about the dug-out, and to prove that her love was reciprocated the janitor pinched my gloves.

"How is the plumbing?" I asked.

"Better," answered the janitor; "in fact it's almost convalescent."

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 57

I suppose he thought I was talking about his Aunt Jane and let it go at that.

Peaches took me by the arm and led me through the condensed catacombs, pointing out the scenery to me along the route.

"This room," she said, trying to step into a dent in the wall, "we'll fix up as your den."

"It might make a good den for a squirrel," I squeaked. "Why, I couldn't growl in a den like that."

"Oh, there's plenty of room," she cooed.

"That's only because it hasn't been papered," I insisted.

Then the janitor came bubbling to the surface and led us to the dining-room.

"How cute!" Peaches gurgled.

"It is cute," I agreed; "but it looks more like a mousetrap."

Anyway the place pleased Peaches, so I was game to hang up my hat there if she was.

"How much?" I said to Charles Pepperface, the janitor.

"Three thousand," he answered without a tremor.

"What for?" I inquired blandly.

"For this apartment," he cross-counteried.

"Three thousand dollars a year—each month in advance—no dogs—no children—no turkey-trot parties—no piano playing after 11 P. M.—you must deal with the grocer, butcher, laundry and haberdasher that I suggest, and no——"

THE APARTMENT HOUSE BOOBS 59

I turned to look at Peaches. She was in the elevator, gasping for breath.

I joined her in the elevator and in the gasping.

We gasped all the way back to the hotel.

Maybe Syd D'Brie was right about that Rube proposition.

Peaches and I sat down by the window and with the roar of Broadway in our ears we closed our eyes and pictured a cosy cottage with its green shutters and ivy climbing up the porch; with a bit of lawn where roses struggled with the honeysuckle for our admiration:

Tush! the real Rube has all the best of it.
Surest thing you know!

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOME DINNER BOOBS



Say! did you ever get ready and move into a new apartment?

Take it from me it's an occupation that makes the burn-

ing of Rome look like an election night bonfire.

I'm going to talk harshly about it some day when I recover the use of three fingers, disfranchised by the unexpected closing of a folding door which had previously refused to fold.

However, here we are in the "cosy little nest" that Peaches sopranoed about so canaryishly for many weeks before we finally flew up into this tenement tree.

Now that we are in "the nest" she sings a different tune, poor girl, because she finds it mighty hard to hit a high C of joy when she has to put in eighteen hours a day waiting for the dumb-waiter to be fixed, and the hot water to be turned on, and the knob introduced to the dining-room door, and all the other thousand and one pre-election promises, so earnestly given and so eagerly unkept.

Now we come to the plot of the piece.

Peaches invited a few friends to a house-warming dinner and an hour after they had vociferously accepted our cook got mad be-

cause she found out the Persian rug on her boudoir floor was made in New Jersey and quit—left us flat with a bunch of friends on our hands who had already gone in training for a long heavy feed; catch as catch can, strangle-hold barred, but go to the mat with everything from clams to the printer's name.

For twenty-four hours Peaches spent her time hurrying between the intelligence offices and the depths of despair, and that dinner party began to look like cold turkey.

And the next day, just as I was about to send out the S.O.S. signals, a tramp cook arrived with the milkman, prepared to pour oil on our troubled kitchen stove.

The name of the new cook was Helga. She was half Swede and half deaf.

Peaches asked her for her recommendations, and Helga said that her only recommendation was her face, but that she tripped the night before and broke it just above the chin.

Peaches engaged her—what else could she do with kind and loving friends eager to exercise our silverware and gurgling their hunger at our outer walls?

Helga was shown to her room. She kicked a little because there wasn't a Southern exposure, but subsided when Peaches promised her a bunch of fresh cut flowers every morning. Then the procession started for the kitchen, halting for a moment in the butler's pantry so that Helga could inform herself as

to whether we voted the Prohibition or Progressive ticket.

Helga discovered four bottles of beer coyly reposing on the ice in the refrigerator, whereupon her face became lighted up with the joys of anticipation, and she rushed out and embraced the gas stove.

When, later on, Peaches joined me in the front room, she looked woe-begone and frightened. "It's an awful risk," she sighed; "I feel that the friendship of years may be interrupted because we have a new and uncertain cook in the kitchen—do you get me, John?"

"Sure," I said; "but what are we going to do about it, Kid? It's too late to cancel our bookings now. These friends of ours have been saving up their hunger for three days.

We can't send them a buttered biscuit on a postal-card and pass them up. Let's go through with it, and hope for the best—maybe Helga is a good cook."

"I'm afraid not, John," Peaches moaned. "She picked up a bowl of radishes just now, and said she thought strawberries were out of season. When I asked her if she knew how to cook chicken-a-la-king she wanted to know which King—Denmark or Germany!"

During the rest of the day Peaches worried so much about the new cook that she almost had an attack of nervous postponement. She walked around the apartment with her fingers crossed, murmuring little prayers to herself, and making wishes that Helga's idea of potato

salad wouldn't turn out to be imitation chop suey.

Our guests arrived promptly, and we could see from their eager faces that they'd fight that dinner to a finish.

Under ordinary conditions the arrival of friends with hearty appetites is a compliment to be cherished, but, with a visitation like Helga in the kitchen, likely at any moment to kick over the can containing the milk of human kindness, I felt like eight cents' worth of God-help-us.

The ladies in the party began to chat pleasantly, while they sized up our furniture out of the corners of their eyes, and the men glanced carelessly around to see if I had a box

of cigars which could be attended to after dinner.

At least I imagined that's what they were doing—having qualified as a bum sport from the moment Helga began to rehearse a dish-rag.

Presently dinner was announced, and the entire cast jumped to their feet as though they'd stepped on a third rail.

The first round was oyster cocktails, and everybody drew cards.

This was Helga's maiden effort at oyster cocktails, and she had original ideas about the cocktail, consisting chiefly of salad oil and tabasco.

The salad oil came from Italy, consequently the oysters were extremely foreign to the taste.

After exploring her cocktail glass with a fork Mrs. Fitzenstaatz politely inquired if we raised our own oysters, but just then a gill of tabasco struck Mr. Fitzenstaatz between the thorax and the epiglottis, and he spent the rest of the evening screaming for the fire department.

The next round was mock turtle soup, but nobody under the wide canopy of heaven can ever guess where Helga found the mock.

Sometimes I think I may have surprised her secret, because later on when I looked for my rubber boots one of them was missing.

Then we had fish—blue-fish. It had arrived in the kitchen just a simple, plain, kind-hearted fish with the blues, but, after watching Helga's work, it had developed acute melancholia.

Then came the roast turkey, and right here was where Helga stepped to the footlights and clamored for the Victoria Cross.

Peaches had told Helga to stuff the turkey with chestnuts, but Helga was firm in her belief that a chestnut is an old wheeze, so she stuffed the turkey with peanut brittle.

Helga had noticed several other things around the kitchen which appeared to be bored and lonely, so she stuffed them in the turkey—one of which was the corkscrew.

When I started to carve the turkey the first thing I struck was a horseshoe, which Helga had put in for luck.

It made Peaches extremely nervous to see the can-opener, a pair of scissors, and seven clothespins come out of the interior of the tur-

key, but, when Mrs. Fitzenstaatz said that their latest cook had tried to stuff their latest turkey with the garden hose, friend wife felt better.

The next round was some salad which Helga had dressed in the kitchen, but the dress was such a bad fit that nobody would speak of it.

Then we had some home-made ice cream for dessert.

The ice was very good, but Helga forgot to add the cream.

Consequently it tasted rather insipid.

Then came the last round—and the knock-out.

Helga had been told to serve the coffee *demi tasse*.

When the cue came Helga floated in the room, clad in a low neck gown, such as the merry-merries wear in the Bal Tabarin scene in the second act, just before the police break in.



Then she splashed down in front of all assembled a cup of brown cough mixture, and floated out again, while Peaches turned red,

white and blue, and I had all I could do to keep from becoming a murderer.

It afterwards transpired that, in the shredded wheat which Helga was using as a brain, the words *demi tasse* and *decolleté* had become mixed, and, having taken the low-neck as a souvenir of a former employer, she had decided *demi tasse* meant: "Enter from kitchen, smilingly, with anatomical display; place coffee on table, center, and exit, showing vertebra."

However, the house-warming dinner came to a finish without any casualties, and the guests went home, hungry, but unpoisoned.

The next morning Peaches gave Helga Helga, and she left us abruptly, followed by the prayers of all present, including the gas stove.

The only thing about the house that loved Helga was a diamond brooch, belonging to Peaches, and it followed Helga out into the land of adventure.

We've made up our minds, friend wife and I have, that we'll give no more dinner till we get a cook who knows the difference between breaded lamb chops and the coal scuttle.

Even the friendship of a lifetime isn't proof against a brass key-ring in the stomach, which lies there, tossing restlessly for weeks and weeks, sometimes.

P. S.—Helga's contract called for \$35.00 per month, Sundays and Thursday evening out, and nix on the wash.

Have you a little fairy in your home?

CHAPTER V

THE POKER PARTY BOOBS



Say! did you ever
take what little
money you had and
attend a P o k e r
Party?

Well, in a moment of mental aberration I suggested the proposition to friend wife, and she fell for it with loud screams of delight.

Poker parties would be all right if it were not for the fact that somebody has to lose.

Not having an ear for music it annoys me to hear the boobs squeal.

But Peaches figured it out that she'd invite a small, congenial bunch, and, with a quarter limit, it would be a 100 to 1 shot we could live through the evening without bloodshed.

Hep Hardy was first choice. Hep has two missions in life. One is to go to parties, and the other is saying "Good evening!" to bartenders.

Of course Uncle Louis Miffendale was invited, as was also Aunt Jessica Miffendale. These two relatives were wished on Peaches at birth—they are mine by marriage.

They are nice people, but any time they decide to go around the world for their health I'll be at the dock to see them off.

As my contribution to the kitty we invited Spud Dalrymple and his wife, Sybil.

Spud is a Wall Street broker, but since the market went wrong some months ago he's been working for a living—paper-hanging, I think, or maybe it's real estate.

Sybil used to be a chorus queen, but she married Spud, and recovered almost entirely.

Poker players, I've noticed, are divided into two classes: The Companions of the Cold Feet, and The Little Brothers of the Boost.

The Companions of the Cold Feet make the most money, but the Little Brothers of the Boost sing Glory Hallelujah, and give an occasional squint at the scenery as they march on to the Poor House.

The first Jackpot was finally opened by Sam.

We all stayed in, and after the draw it was just beginning to look cheerful when Peaches exclaimed eagerly: "Oh, John, do Sixes beat Fulls?"

Everybody present dipped up a titter, and the poor girl looked ready to faint.

"Sure!" I said, just to bring her back to earth.

You know, I like Peaches. She's a fine girl, and a good wife, but from the heart I say she plays poker like a Welsh rabbit, which is without form and void.

Peaches's poker procedure is full of hushed silences and dark surprises.

From a social point of view Peaches is the best fellow that ever drew cards, but, with regard to the technicalities of poker, she is

what the ancient Greeks would call a Patricia Bolivar.

Sam bet his quarter and Hep Hardy raised him. Peaches was next, and she hoisted them both, to my painful surprise.

The rest of us took to our parachutes and dropped, and so did Hep on the next lap.

Then Sam and Peaches began to talk back and forth at each other in sharp, terse terms, all of which meant money, and I had to sit there and watch her being dragged to the shambles, powerless to help her.

Every time Sam peeped she was back at him with a raise.

I could see a whole month's household expenses traveling home in Sam's pocket.

I tried to give Peaches the bugle call to cease firing, but she never once came to the surface.

Sam had nearly all his checks set in, and Peaches reached over and touched my stack for a handful.



The pot began to look like a picture entitled "Rockefeller in the Safety Deposit Vaults."

Sam was breathing hard, and pink spots be-

gan to appear on his forehead. His heart was "missing" like an excited carburetor.

I could almost hear him saying, over and over to himself: "This is a sin, and I hate to do it, but I need the money."

Presently, however, his chips were all in, so he repented and called Peaches.

As he did so he threw on the table a King full of Bullets, and proceeded to cover the gate receipts with eager mitts.

"Pause!" said Peaches, ever so quietly. "Pause, Mr. Gibson—and walk slowly; I want to keep up with you!" And with that she spread her hand out on the table—four Sixes and a Seven Spot!

Sensation of being stung for Samuel!

He smiled a sickly little smile, showed three

discouraged teeth, and then for the rest of the evening gave an excellent imitation of a pre-occupied Clam.

Peaches the Bunco Kid! Did you get that "John, do Sixes beat Fulls?" Isn't she a wonder, on the level!

I opened the next Jack, and soon find myself out on the long trail all alone with Aunt Jessica.

She plodded along behind me till she had fourteen dollars in Bad Lands, then she sat down on an ice-hummock, removed her snow-shoes, and called me.

When I laid down Four Typewriters she called me again—but I'd hate to tell you what it was.

She had Four Deuces all the time, and after

the first bet she walked into one of those Maisons on Fifth Avenue and started to pick out a new gown.

On the second bet she selected a Worth creation with a slit skirt.

After the third bet she bought an opera cloak to go with it.

After the fourth bet she bade the Proprietor ring for a taxi and took her expensive purchases home herself.

Pretty soon came the awful awakening, and she had to put everything back in the store.

I don't think Aunt Jessica will ever recover from the shock. She doesn't care any more for money than you do for your right eye.

And then, to make matters more like a political afternoon in Mexico for the Miffendales,

Hep Hardy, with a diamond flush, climbed the trellis work on the outskirts of Uncle Louis, and gave him the gaff for eleven sawbucks.

It surely was a rough night at sea for the Miffies.

Those two members in good standing in the Ancient Order of the Companions of the Cold Feet had to sit there all the rest of the evening playing 'em close trying to get their coin back—which they didn't.

The mills of the gods grind slow, but once in a while they grind out something worth while.

When the company had gone I said to Peaches: "Where did you get that fourth Six, and who taught you the game?"

"Oh," she chirped, with a smile, "I just picked it up."

"Which," I said, "the game or the Six?"

She hasn't answered me yet.

That was a week ago.

"Anyway, I'm glad you don't belong to the Companions of the Cold Feet," I said to her, as I swept the icicles away from the spot occupied by Uncle Louis.

"No," she came back at me, "I always play with my rubbers on."

"With the rubbers on," I echoed. "Right-O! and in poker that goes for the neck as well as the feet."

"Surest thing you know," she last worded.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHOPPING BOOBS



Say! did you ever
take your life in your
right hand and go
shopping with your
wife?

I tried it the other
day, and I've been

hearing voices ever since.

When I say "shopping" I don't mean that
simple, everyday gag of bursting suddenly in
upon the sleepy floorwalker in a delicatessen
parlor, and with languid elbows leaning over
the remnants of a once beautiful cheese while

he cruelly separates four kippered herring from the bosom of a large and loving family.

Nix—I mean Big League shopping. I mean that kind of shopping that women go in training for two weeks in advance; high-class, expert shopping, where important money changes hands; the kind of shopping that wives look forward to with dreamy eyes and live ever after on the memories; the shopping that sweeps a husband off his feet, and makes him long to be a dusky-hued postmaster in No. 8 township, Samoan Islands, where the fashion in fig-leaves is permanent and money is a myth.

“John,” said Peaches, the other morning, “I want you to go to the stores with me to-day.

I have a lot of shopping to do, and you can be such a help to me, because——”

“Wait a minute, friend wife,” I broke in. “What have I done that you should wish such a calamity on me? Tell me to go out and get for my personal use an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and I’ll do so; ask me to try to catch a street car at the corner of Broadway and Forty-third Street, and I’ll work hard at the job up to the time a murderous taxicab climbs my front elevation and maims me for life—but don’t, oh! wife, *don’t* ask me to go shopping with you!”

“Nonsense!” she gurgled. “I can’t go alone, can I? And, besides, you must help me select two new gowns at the Maison de Splash—I must have at least two, mustn’t I? And from

there we'll go to Ginkstein and Boobheimer's, where I want to get a hat—I must have something chic to take off in the theaters, mustn't I? And then we'll spend an hour in Gorgonzola Brothers, where I can pick out the set of furs you promised me for Christmas, and then we'll go to Camembert's for some gloves I need, and then——”

Help! Throw me *anything!* Don't you see I'm sinking?

The answer is I went—and live to prattle about it.

You know this shopping gag brings out more prominently than anything else the fact that the high cost of living is caused by living high at any cost.

The ancient Greeks had a saying, “He spends

his money like a drunken sailor," and that goes for seventy-five out of a hundred to-day.

The majority of the boobs give daily imitations of the sailor, and they don't even wait to get intoxicated.

Whatever my neighbor does I must do—only more so.

If my neighbor saves up eight dollars and twenty cents and buys a red benzine buggy I immediately get together seven dollars and a quarter and get a blue one. In the meantime the automobile people put a white chalk mark on our houses.

If your wife buys a nearly-sealskin coat my wife has to rush and get an almost-mink with possibly-ermine trimmings, and the children fill up the holes in their shoes with putty and ex-

claim, "Oh, doesn't Mamma look sweet in the fur mackintosh!"

Vanity is a worm that eats the lining out of a pocketbook.

All of which is neither here nor there, as the engineer said, when the train left the track.

So it's back to that shopping proposition with friend wife.

Our first port of call was the Maison de Splash, where they trim a piano cover with a lace curtain and call it a "creation."

It certainly was a gorgeous cosy corner, that place! The walls were decorated in soft, harmonious shades, and the floor had an Alfalfa carpet so a woman could faint wherever she happened to be standing when told the price of the particular gown she had picked to win.

D'Artagnan's grandfather met us at the front gate and swashbuckled us into the main Torture Room in the Inquisition.

Suffering Savings Banks, such gowns! Never before have I seen so many good excuses for a woman to leave home.

In the meantime D'Artagnan's grandfather was splashing French idioms in all directions, until I turned and gave him the mackerel eye. Then he switched to English—and killed it, all except a few vowels.

“Ah! Madame wishes a new gown, *n'est-ce pas?* Something chic, Parisian, *ravissant, n'est-ce pas?* I have here such wonders! Paquin, yes! Worth, eh! Poiret, yes! Callot Soeurs, eh? Doucet, yes!” Then he nailed me with the gimlet-holes he used as eyes.

"Is that the correct batting order for today?" I inquired politely.

"Batting ordaire!" he fumbled, and then Peaches ordered me to the bench.

She turned and whispered a few encouraging words to D'Artagnan's grandfather, whereupon he began to do Pavlowas hither and thither across the room until he finally disappeared.

"He's going to show us the latest creations," Peaches explained.

"What is he," I worried, "a French nobleman over here under cover to pick up a bit of cake money?"

"Of course not," she pouted. "He is M'sieu Voulezvous, the proprietor of the Maison de

Splash—a recognized authority on women's dress."

Enter M'sieu Voulezvous, alias D'Artagnan's grandfather, at left Second; followed by Clara Panatella, blonde and glad of it.

"Who is the ingenue?" I whispered.



"Shush!" friend wife came back. "She is nothing but a manikin parading a costume. Isn't it perfectly lovely?"

"*Oui, oui!*" chimed in D'Artagnan's grandfather. "You see what it is—yes! Faded gray chiffon cloth, figured with ze raspberry and a small lemon-colored flower. You see double fichus of ze material edged with deep cream-colored Bulgarian embroidery draping ze shouldaire and crossing in ze front and back—*ravissant!* Ze skirt is vaire full at ze top, with ze pannier effect at each side, and draped into a panel of raspberry color silk in ze back, which falls down from a girdle of ze same raspberry color silk—*ravissant*, yes!"

"Exquisite!" murmured Peaches. "How much?"

"Two hundred feefty dollaire," answered D'Artagnan's grandfather, without a quiver. Some actor, that old boy.

I choked back a couple of sobs, and began to think hard. Two hundred and fifty dollars for a dish of raspberries with cream-colored trimmings—assistance!

"How do you like it?" Peaches cooed.

"Lovely!" I answered, as one inspired. "Prettiest hair I've seen. And her eyes—blue mirrors of her native Mediterranean! I've been lost in admiration ever since she floated in the room. Did you get that glad gaze she handed out to me when——"

By this time the blonde Venus wrapped up in the raspberry trimming was being led hurriedly away from there by the bewildered grandfather of D'Artagnan, and, in the short, sharp silence which followed, lightning flashed from the eyes of a certain party and storm

signals were ordered up from the Capes to Bangor.

Enter trippingly, from Left 2nd, Mons. Voulezvous, followed by Carissima Maduro, walking *à la* Slouch.

"Now we have it, yes!" spluttered the ancestor of D'Artagnan, turning the manikin around and around for our inspection. "You see, Le Minaret! It is *ravissant*, *n'est-ce pas!* You, M'sieu, I should value your opinion of Le Minaret, yes!"

"Hoops, my dear!" I assined, not knowing what else to say.

"Le Minaret," continued the friend of Louis XI, "it would be to Madame's beauty as the rose is to a lovely garden, yes!"

He was there with the salve, that old boy.



Hypnotized by the harmony of colors, and carried away by the up-to-dateness of the creation, Peaches breathed in the ear of Voulez-vous an eager, "How much?"

"Three hundred and feefty dollaire," he breathed back to her.

Sinking for the second time, I didn't breathe at all.

Then, with a forgiving smile, Peaches turned to me and said, "Isn't it lovely? Isn't it wonderful?"

"She is," I answered; "she's a quaint little package of pepper—that's what she is! I thought I liked that blonde, but it was only a passing fancy. This brune has me limping after her along the Road to Happiness. Did you pipe the smile she saved up for me and me

alone? She must burn acetylene in both lamps, because I'm all lit up with excitement.

A queen, take it from an expert — a queen!"

Exit Le Minaret hurriedly.

Voulezvous stood there expressing astonishment with both shoulders and the small of his back.

"Does Madame prefer something else, yes?" he wigwagged, after noticing how high in the air Peaches was wearing her chin.

"Yes," I butted in quickly, "bring on something nifty in a transparent skirt——"

Curtain.

When I came to I was out on the sidewalk listening to Section VI, Paragraph IV, of the Riot Act.

Then she pointed her nose at the North Star
and left me flat.

Peaches will probably speak to me again
sometime before Christmas. She'll have to if
she believes in Santa Claus.

CHAPTER VII

THE VANITY BOOB



Say! have you ever noticed that the bug called V a n i t y can cook up more trouble for human beings than any germ

that ever built its nest in a brain-cell?

It's a subtle little disease, this fever we call Vanity. No man ever knows he has it, but he can always recognize the symptoms in his neighbor.

Sometimes it breaks out in diamond rings on the fingers; sometimes it takes the form of

ragtime clothing, accompanied by rainbow neckties, and sometimes it drives a man into politics who should remain at his post as the chauffeur of a garbage wagon.

And then again there are occasions when it never shows in a man until after he is dead and his will reads, "I give and bequeath the sum of thirty thousand dollars for the purpose of scattering my ashes from the highest peak of the Himalaya Mountains."

Hep Hardy has it for keeps. Around at the club the other night I saw him drink seven Scotch Highballs because somebody swelled him all up by telling him he never showed the effects of liquor.

Then he had to lean against the buildings all the way home.

Even friend wife isn't proof against the Vanity microbe.

Not long ago some fresh friend told her that she was getting stout, and Peaches promptly fell for every obesity cure known to modern science.

During her calmer moments Peaches has the general appearance of a Fletcherizing canary bird, but when some amiable idiot told her that day by day she was growing to look more and more like a public building she uttered a few shrill screams and started after that obesity proposition with a tommyhawk.

I tried to flag her and talk her out of it, but she waved me back, and said she wasn't going through this world chaperoning a double chin.

So Peaches started in to put the sabots to the fatty tissues, and for a week our erstwhile peaceful home became two reels in the Movies entitled "A Rough Night at Sea."

When I reached home on the eve of the Battle of Embonpoint I found Peaches strolling around the campus made up to look like a lady scarecrow. Her face was concealed behind a muslin mask, there was a feverish glitter in her eyes, and in both hands she clutched a book which proclaimed itself "The Road to Beauty; or, How to Get Thin Without Calling in the Coroner."

As I breezed through the turnstile with a cheery "Good eventide, Lassie!" she turned her acetylene lamps on me and burned me to a standstill.

Then she threw both herself and the book on our nearly-Persian rug, and began to roll around the room. Seeking new worlds to conquer, she rolled out into the dining-room, bumped into the side-board, and exit, rolling into hall with glass-crash.



“What’s the idea?” I gasped, when friend wife rolled back into my life again and dropped anchor in a Morris chair.

“Reducing,” she answered, in the still, small voice of a Marathon runner at the end of the ninety-fourth mile. Then she rushed out and weighed herself, and came back with the glad tidings that she’d lost six and one-quarter ounces.

“Eat one of our new cook’s breakfast rolls and get it back permanently,” I suggested, and Peaches didn’t speak to me for twenty minutes.

The next morning Aunt Jessica Miffendale, who weighs 278 in her war-paint, floated in, and told Peaches that she had picked out the wrong kind of exercise, and presently I was chased off down town for a rowing-machine, a set of Indian clubs, and sixty cents worth of dumbbells.

That evening Peaches jumped merrily on board the rowing-machine, and bore away to the Northeast, with a strong ebb tide on the port bow.

She was about four miles up the river and going hard when a strap broke, whereupon Peaches went overboard with a splash that upset most of the furniture in the room and knocked her manicure set down behind the bureau.

One of the oars went up in the air and landed on the bridge of my nose, because my face happened to be in the way when the oar came down.

When loving hands finally untangled Peaches from the chain-drive of a rocking chair, she found that, with the help of the rowing ma-

chine, she had lost nearly two pounds—mostly off the end of her elbow.

A day or two later Mrs. Fitzenstaatz, who tips the beam at 243, flopped in, like an amiable seal, and told Peaches that her system of physical torture was all wrong. Once more I hot-footed it for the shopping district and returned with one of those rubber contrivances which you carefully fasten to the wall, and then take hold of the handles and try to pull it off again.

Bright and early the next glad morning Peaches grabbed the handles and was getting away from her fat little self at the rate of an ounce an hour, when one of the rubber strings suddenly quit the job, and then something kicked Peaches just where a good singer gets her coloratura.

When Peaches fell wounded on the field of battle she decided hurriedly that something must fall with her, so she selected our new talking-machine, and there was such a crash that our new cook thought the end of the world had arrived, and she ran screaming in the direction of Paterson, N. J.

I had to pour a pitcher of ice water over Peaches' facial expression before she came to, and then she found that all she had lost by the new process was her breath and \$24 worth of records.

She was sitting on a Caruso, with her left foot embedded in a Tetrizzini, while fragments of a Victor Herbert medley nestled coyly in her hair.

Mrs. Gadfrey dropped in next day about

lunch time, and told Peaches that the only *real* way to reduce the flesh is to take a long walk; so Peaches picked out a long walk and took it.

After she was gone about six hours, and it was getting dark, she called me up on the long distance, and broke the news to me that she had walked some fifteen miles, and that she had been terribly extravagant, and had used up all the walk that was in her, and would I please be so kind as to send a taxi and not leave her to perish in a strange land among the savage tribes in the Bronx.

When Peaches reached home that night she found that all the flesh she had lost was her pocketbook, containing ten dollars, and I was set back ten dollars for cab hire, making a

total reduction of four pounds—English money.

A few days later, while I was down town, Mrs. Carruthers dropped in, also at lunch time, and carefully explained to friend wife that the only way to beat back an attack of *avoirdu pois* is to take electric baths.

An hour later Peaches gathered up the family plate, and exchanged it for an electric blanket, which she had sent home immediately.

It was cold that night, so I wasn't at all surprised to see what I supposed was a Mackinaw coat spread over the bed.

I figured on reaching Dreamland by the fast express, but heavens! how warm it began to get.

"The janitor is sure annoying the radiators

with a lot of steam to-night," I said feverishly, but all I got was a sharp "Shush!" from the other half of the sketch.

A half hour passed, and one by one my features trickled away from my face. The temperature jumped up to 211 in the dark.

"For the friendship of Mike," I pleaded, "can't we throw this asbestos quilt on the floor and come out of the fiery furnace?"

"Don't move!" snapped Peaches. "Don't move!"

For another half hour I strolled with Dante through his favorite boiler-room. I felt something sharp and peculiar on my back. It was one of my shoulder-blades, peeping out to see what the matter was. The temperature had started to display itself in four figures when I

gasped: "What is this thing that's over us—a plumber's blow-pipe?"

"Shush!" whispered Peaches. "It's an electric blanket—we're reducing!"

Shrieking the battle-cry of freedom I pushed the volcano off the bed and jumped to my feet.

Peaches also jumped to her feet, and with one of them stepped on an ohm or something, whereupon she let a blood-curdling yell out of her that could be heard in Winnipeg.

Then she put her other foot down, and landed on a volt or an ampere, or something equally exciting, and became short-circuited.

She was the best little short-circuit that ever fussed a fuse.

For two minutes that room looked like a

thunderstorm, with Peaches playing all the elements.

When I finally got the current turned off and all the live wires out of her hair, Peaches collapsed on the sofa, screaming: "Take it away! Take it away! Now I know what a hard life the third rail must lead!"

I think the electric blanket has cured friend wife.

At any rate all the exercising dofunny's have been presented to the janitor's children, and Peaches has promised to be kind to a double chin, if Nature slips her one.

Old King Solomon had the right idea when he said to his typewriter: "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!"

If a surgeon could remove our Vanity as easily as he removes an appendix there'd be a lot more money in the savings bank.

What do *you* think?

CHAPTER VIII

THE TIPPING BOOBS



Say! did you ever
make up your mind
not to do any more
tipping? And have
y o u noticed h o w
quickly you're forced
to take the make-up

off? I say, have you noticed it?

In a Big Town nowadays tipping is as necessary as a traffic cop. Only by the aid of one or both can you make any progress or get anywhere.

And the battle-cry in each case is "Hands up!"

It's so in this country to-day that before a thoughtful man cushion-caroms through the merry-go-round doors of a swell hotel he has to leave his pocketbook on the sidewalk if he doesn't want to lose it.

On the other side, across the Big Pond, if a hotel employee does you a little favor, and you slip him tuppence ha'penny, or a pfennig, he will smile back at you and be much obliged for five minutes.

But in this country if you tip anybody with a couple of pennies the chances are you'll wake up in the nearest hospital and find a kind-hearted, but not very pictorial, nurse leaning over you, and whispering: "Keep callum,

now ; keep cool and callum ! The doctor says you will recover everything except your watch, if he can find a small piece of the medulla oblongata which was removed from the north-eastern part of your bean when the bell-boy soaked you with the ice-pitcher !”

It takes a brave man to save his money these days.

Hep Hardy is one of those reckless tip-tosers. He thinks that all silver money should have a smooth surface, thereby making it easier to slip a coin to a waiter.

He is what the laurajeans would call a pepper-box of prodigality.

Hep hands out backsheesh like an absent-minded farmer sowing grain.

Hep’s trail through a Big Town looks as

though the cashier of a five-and-ten-cent store was walking to the bank and had a hole in the canvas bag.

When Hep starts out to pound a public road with his rowdy-cart all the waiters in every hash-foundry within sound of his siren fall flat on their faces and yell, "Hallelujah! Pay-day is here again!"

Peaches and I dined with Hep at the Saint Astorvilt Hotel night before last. Hep likes to dine there, because the waiters are French, and when he tries to say "Good evening!" in their native tongue he insults them so bitterly he has to sprinkle the room with tip-money in order to square himself.

Hep loves to squeeze into a French café, grab a French menu card, and, in a confiden-

tial tone, give an order like this to the French waiter: "*Avec la beaucoup pomme de terre. Donnez moi de l'eau chaude: je vais me raser. Avec get a move on you!*"

In a French hour and a half the French waiter hurries back with a culinary melodrama wherein each swallow is a thrill, and every new course a climax, and Hep, believing it is all due to his knowledge of the French language, swells up with pride and begins to toss money into the air.

Hep doesn't know it, but, while he's spilling that Schenectady French all over the tablecloth, the waiter is getting a stone bruise on his palate from holding back his Parisian laughter.

Hep would wrinkle his map with anger if

he heard me, but I've been present when he has blurted out some of his French idioms with the ossified accent, and it's a scream, I notify you!

On one memorable occasion he ordered lamb chops and a baked potato in French. The waiter bowed, said, "Oui M'sieu!" and brought him a bowl of vegetable soup and the morning paper.

That's how good that lad's French is—poor nut.

As a matter of fact Hep knows exactly nine ordinary French words, including *n'est-ce pas* and *avec plaisir*, but he has memorized the name of every street in Paris.

So, when Hep exhausts his nine ordinary words, he begins to use up the streets. He

rushes, regardless of speed limits, all over the city of Paris. Out to Vaurigard, over to Basignolles, to Clichy, by Rues and side-streets to the Eastern Boulevard Beaumarchais and St. Denis, then across lots to the western Boulevard des Italiens, then into the high and off through the Place de la Concorde, around corners on one wheel into the Champs Élysées, and on and on with the muffler off—it's immense!

However, as I was saying some time ago, Peaches and I dined with Hep, and he handed us a few lessons in the gentle pastime of tipping, he surely did.

From the very moment we entered the aristocratic beanery he began the giving of alms.


The attendant at the revolving doors impris-

oned a nice old lady in cell No. 3, and kept her there, cut off from communication with the world, while he waited for Hep to dig in his jeans for the customary quarter.

A hall-boy, paging a missing husband, stopped short, as he saw our party approaching, arranged his face in imitation of a Spanish mackerel, saluted Hep, and received ten cents for his trouble.

Battling Bill, the house detective, loomed bulkily in our pathway, and, without warning, suddenly stooped down to pick up a pin.

Hep did a hoodah over the tame Cop's feet, and when they both came smilingly to the surface Battling Bill clutched a fifty-cent piece in his Westphalia and the procession moved on.



Then from some dark recess or niche in the wall something in brass buttons, and with a whisk broom in its hand, darted out like a pickerel and pointed the whisk broom at Hep. The latter pointed a quarter at the something in brass buttons, whereupon the brass buttons and the whisk broom and the quarter darted away again, thereby bringing to a conclusion the incident of the pickerel.

As we approach the coat-room the girl in charge was seen to close her eyes in prayer. She didn't open them again until after Hep had explained to her that if she spent the money he gave her for a new hat she wouldn't have to give it to the income-tax gatherers. Whereupon she was glad and showed her gum-chewing instruments. Then she glanced at

the inside of my hat, to see if it was expensive, and sighed deeply as we passed on.

At the door of the soup room we were met by Effendi Bey, the head waiter.

Hep whispered something to Effendi, but the Bey wasn't listening. He was looking at Hep's hand, which he knew must contain money. It always did. Hep gave Effendi a flash at a Treasury note. With the swiftness of thought the money changed hands, whereupon Effendi Bey began to hum, "In my harem—my dinky little harem!" and turned us over to Murad Pasha, one of his lieutenants.

Murad Pasha led us to a table and stood there—counting the spoons—until Hep could find another pocket containing money.

Then Murad Pasha, clutching his share of

the plunder, with many bows and obeisances, faded out of our lives, and Giovanni Handsandfesti, the omnibus, began to splash water into our glasses.

Hep got rid of Giovanni by staking him to enough money to enable his little brother Angelo to get through college, and thereafter for a period of ten or fifteen minutes Hep was permitted to breathe quietly through his nose, and his pocketbook enjoyed a much-needed rest.

Soon, however, another coughing fit came on, and his struggles for breath were pitiful.

One of Effendi Bey's lieutenants, made up to look like Ivan the Terrible, rode up to our table to inquire if a waiter had taken our order. Hep told him no, but Ivan couldn't be-

lieve it. Ivan was firm in his disbelief until Hep gave him money, then he saw the light, and went joyously away from there.

Presently a waiter arrived who in some other incarnation must have been a pirate on the Spanish Main.

He had a chin which was divided against itself, and a forehead which was retreating hurriedly on the fourth speed.

One look at Captain Kidd, and I knew that Hep's desire to die poor but popular would be realized.

All the time the Captain was taking our order he was sizing us up and hoping in Portuguese that Hep's eyesight wasn't good, so he could short-change him.

Finally the deadly Rover of the Seas de-

cided to give us our food first and make us walk the plank afterward. Then he bore away, sou' by sou'east, for the kitchen, where he dropped anchor and sharpened his boarding-irons.

In the meantime, while we awaited the return of the Pirate King, our friend Hep was busy tipping.

Every time he took a cigarette from his case four eager waiters would dash forward, with lighted matches, and Hep, desiring to show no partiality, would slip a coin to each of the Mexican guerillas.

One shark of a waiter swam around in the offing, and every time Hep's serviette dropped from his knees to the floor the shark would retrieve it, and, as he came to the surface with

the serviette in his teeth, Hep would pat his head and reward him cheerfully.



It was one continuous orgy of tipping until finally we left the Prunes Palace with Captain Kidd gloating over the pieces of eight which Hep had given him, and singing to himself: "Oh, ho—a bottle of rum on a dead man's chest!"

Hep insisted upon taking us home in a taxi,

so that he could tip the starter and the chauffeur.

We stopped in the drug store at our home corner, to mail some letters, and even there Hep found a weighing machine and tipped the scales—s'cat!

There are ginks like Hep in every Big Town, going through the night like a cyclone through the sub-treasury, scattering pocket money right and left, like so much chaff, simply because they want to be looked upon as High Class Sports.

And it's hard to follow their act. It's rough sledding for the Sensible Lads who are willing to pay for services rendered but balk at the myriad of outstretched paws which line the Pathways of Enjoyment.

I was talking to Miff Patterson about it. Miff invented a machine for removing sun-burn from pickles and made a fortune.

He has it yet, all except two cents he paid for a postage stamp, which stuck to his pocket-book some nine years ago.

But he has the pocketbook, and he still can look at the stamp and consider it an asset.

Miff is such a stingy loosener he looks at you with one eye, so as not to waste the other.

The boys call him "Putty," because he's the next thing to a pain.

If you ask him what time it is he takes off four minutes as his commission for telling you.

"Tipping!" said Miff. "What do you mean tipping?"

"To give a bit of coin to a waiter or those who do you a service," I explained.

"Oh!" said Miff. "I've heard about it, but I don't do it. I don't know any waiter well enough to give him money to take home to his wife. She might meet me afterwards and thank me for it, and my wife might hear about it—that's risky work."

"But you can't get good service in the restaurants or hotels unless you do a bit of tipping. How do you manage it?" I inquired.

"Easy," Miff answered. "I never go to the same hotel twice. I begin at the head of the list and go to them all. By the time I get around to the first one again all the old waiters have grown rich and have gone back to Bulgaria, so I'm safe—that's my system."

Maybe Hep is right, and maybe Miff is right.
For my part I believe in moderation, betwixt
and bechune.

What do you think?

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